

Library Code of Conduct/Patron Behavior Policy

Introduction:

To ensure a welcoming, safe, secure, and enjoyable environment where all individuals are entitled to use the facility and library services, the Belmont Literary & Historical Society Free Library staff shall enforce the following Library Code of Conduct Policy.

This policy applies to all library property, including inside the building and outdoor areas. The library is considered a limited public forum.

Patrons are expected to respect each other, library personnel, and library property. To maintain a welcoming and safe environment:

- No person shall commit or attempt to commit any activity that constitutes a violation of federal, state, or local law.
- No person shall engage in disruptive, disorderly, or unsafe conduct. Threatening behavior and destruction of property will not be tolerated.
- Young children (ages five and under) must be supervised at all times by a caregiver or parent. Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by a caregiver or parent. Library staff cannot legally assume the role of caregiver.

Examples of Inappropriate Conduct:

Minor Offenses:

- Using the library as a place for extended sleep.
- Excessive and disruptive conversations.
- Beverages must be covered, and food must be eaten only in designated areas.
- Using materials for purposes other than reading, research, viewing, or listening.
- Unauthorized canvassing, selling, soliciting, or engaging in commercial activity.
- Smoking, vaping, chewing tobacco, or gambling.
- Littering or improper waste disposal.
- Entering the library without proper footwear or clothing, including a shirt.
- Having bodily hygiene that is offensive or creates a biohazard.
- Audible cell phone usage is allowed only in designated areas. Please be respectful of those around you.
- Using skates, skateboards, or scooters in the library.
- Improper use of computers. (See the Computer & Internet Use Policy.)
- Bringing in animals, except for trained service animals. Service animals must be under control at all times. Staff may ask if the animal is required due to a disability and what task it has been trained to perform.
- Other activities inconsistent with reading, studying, and use of library materials.

Major Offenses:

- Stealing or damaging library property.
- Committing any crime, misdemeanor, or violation of municipal ordinances.
- Harassing or threatening behavior toward patrons, staff, or volunteers, including stalking.
- Using library materials or equipment in inappropriate or illegal ways, such as accessing pornographic materials or printing copyrighted content.
- Fighting or challenging others to fight.
- Carrying weapons of any kind.
- Consuming alcoholic beverages or using illegal substances on library premises.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol in a manner that disrupts library use.
- Knowingly entering non-public areas without permission.
- Defacing library property, including desks, restrooms, and walls.

Loss of Library Privileges & Enforcement:

Engaging in prohibited behaviors may result in one or more of the following consequences, at the discretion of the Library Director, depending on the severity of the violation. Patrons suspended from the library for more than one day may petition to have their suspension reviewed by the Director and, if necessary, by the Library Board of Trustees. If a patron is banned, a copy of the Banned Patron Form will be provided to the individual and local law enforcement.

Treatment of Minor Offenses:

- First infraction: Verbal warning and a copy of the Library Code of Conduct Policy provided.
- Second infraction: Removal from the library for the day.
- Third and subsequent infractions: Banning from the library premises for one week.

Treatment of Major Offenses:

Any patron committing a major offense will be immediately removed from the premises. Depending on the nature of the offense, the extent of damage or disruption caused, and any prior infractions, the patron may be banned for up to 12 months at the discretion of the Director or designee.

Appeals:

Any patron subjected to enforcement of this policy may file a written complaint with the Director within five days of the disputed action. The Director will review the complaint and provide a written response within five business days. If the patron requests a review by the Library Board of Trustees, the Director will submit all relevant information within five business days. The Board will review the complaint at their next scheduled meeting and provide a written response within five business days of that meeting.

Approved: March 20th, 2025

The Belmont Literary & Historical Society Free Library Banned Patron Form

When possible, a copy of this form will be given to the patron, the Library Director, and local law enforcement.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Completed by Staff Member: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Date of Occurrence: _____

Name of Person(s) Involved: _____

Address/Phone: _____

Description of the Offense: _____

Were the police contacted? (Y/N): _____

Officer's Name and Badge Number: _____

Is the patron banned? (If yes, add start and end date): _____

Director/Designee Signature: _____

Letter to Patron/Banned Form

This letter should be completed on library letterhead and sent to the patron's mailing address along with the dated and signed Banned Patron Form.

Belmont Literary & Historical Society Free Library
2 Willets Street
Belmont, NY 14813

{Date}

{Patron Name}

{Patron Full Address}

Subject: Notice of Library Patron Ban

Dear {Patron Name},

This letter serves to inform you that your library privileges at the Belmont Literary & Historical Society Free Library have been revoked, effective immediately, due to violating of our library policies, including {list specific violations, such as disruptive behavior, damage to property etc}.

Specifically, on {date}, you were observed {describe violation}, and on {date}, you {describe another violation}.

As a result of these actions, your access to the library will be suspended for a period of {duration of ban}.

If you wish to appeal this decision, please submit a written request to Erica Moses within 5 days of receiving this letter.

Sincerely,

Erica L Moses
Library Director